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Suggestions for the conduct of educational...

[Washington]

[1917]

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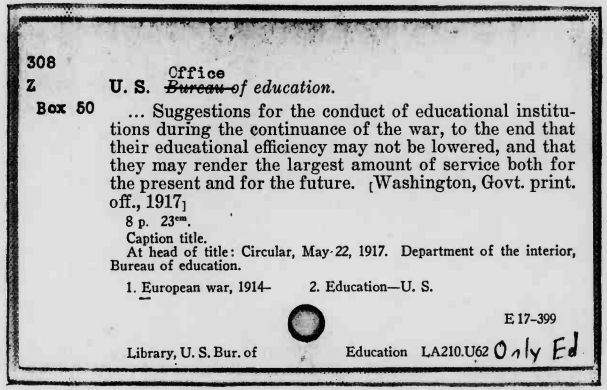

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U. S. Office ~~Bureau~~ of education.

... Suggestions for the conduct of educational institutions during the continuance of the war, to the end that their educational efficiency may not be lowered, and that they may render the largest amount of service both for the present and for the future. [Washington, Govt. print. off., 1917]

8 p. 23cm.

Caption title.

At head of title: Circular, May 22, 1917. Department of the interior, Bureau of education.

1. European war, 1914– 2. Education—U. S.

E 17-399

Library, U. S. Bur. of Education LA210.U62 Only Ed

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TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mm REDUCTION RATIO: 11:1 IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 2-4-97 INITIALS: MS

TRACKING # : 21135

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CIRCULAR, MAY 22, 1917.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
BUREAU OF EDUCATION.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CONDUCT OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS DURING THE CONTINUANCE OF THE WAR, TO THE END THAT THEIR EDUCATIONAL EFFICIENCY MAY NOT BE LOWERED, AND THAT THEY MAY RENDER THE LARGEST AMOUNT OF SERVICE BOTH FOR THE PRESENT AND FOR THE FUTURE.

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
BUREAU OF EDUCATION,
Washington, May 22, 1917.

SIR: Many officers and teachers of all grades and kinds of schools have appealed to the Commissioner of Education for advice as to what policy should be pursued by the schools during the war. It is, I believe, the desire of those responsible for the policies of the schools that they be made to serve the country most effectively in its time of need, and that in doing so they shall not fail in their great task of preparing for citizenship and for service to society, State, and Nation in the future. After careful consideration and consultation with educators in different parts of the country I have prepared the brief statement transmitted herewith for publication. This statement embodies, I believe, the consensus of opinion of many who are most directly responsible for the schools and of others who have given this subject most consideration, and it is at the same time fully in harmony with the policy of the administration at Washington and of all who carry the burdens of responsibility for the conduct of the war and of the defense of the country. It is very desirable that some such statement be made at this time, to the end that there may be a clear understanding of conditions and needs and a reasonable amount of concerted action.

Respectfully submitted.

P. P. CLAXTON,
Commissioner.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

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SUGGESTIONS BY THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION.

The United States has entered into the war to the end that its own democracy shall be safeguarded and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people may prevail over all the world. But democracy requires for success universal knowledge, intelligence, and virtue of high degree, and must protect itself from weakness and corruption from within no less than from forceful invasion from without. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that during the continuance of the war and through the years immediately following there shall be no lowering in the efficiency of our systems of education. Schools and other agencies of education must be maintained at whatever necessary cost and against all hurtful interference with their regular work except as may be necessary for the national defense, which is of course our immediate task and must be kept constantly in mind and have right of way everywhere and at all times. From the beginning of our participation in the war we should avoid the mistakes which some other countries have made to their hurt and which they are now trying to correct.

If the war should be long and severe, there will be great need in its later days for many young men and women of scientific knowledge, training, and skill; and it may then be much more difficult than it is now to support our schools, to spare our children and youth from other service and to permit them to attend school. Therefore no school should close its doors now or shorten its term unnecessarily. All young men and women in college should remain and use their time to the very best advantage, except such as may find it necessary to leave for immediate profitable employment in some productive occupation or for the acceptance of some position in some branch of the military service, which position can not be so well filled by anyone else. All children in the elementary schools and as nearly as possible all high-school pupils should remain in school through the entire session.

When the war is over, whether within a few months or after many years, there will be such demands upon this country for men and women of scientific knowledge, technical skill, and general culture as have never before come to any country. The world must be

rebuilt. This country must play a far more important part than it has in the past in agriculture, manufacturing and commerce, and also in the things of cultural life—art, literature, music, scientific discovery.

Russia and China are awakening to new life and are on the eve of great industrial development. They will ask of us steel, engines, and cars for railroads, agricultural implements, and machinery for industrial plants. They will also ask for men to install these and to direct much of their development in every line. England, France, Italy, and the central Empires have thrown into battle a very large per cent of their educated and trained men, including most of the young professors and instructors in their universities, colleges, gymnasien, lycées, and public schools. Their colleges and universities are almost empty. The young men who would under normal conditions be receiving the education and training necessary to prepare them for leadership in the future development of these countries are fighting and dying in the trenches. All these countries must needs go through a long period of reconstruction, industrially and in many other respects. Our own trained men and women should be able and ready to render every possible assistance. It should be remembered that the number of students in our universities, colleges, normal schools, and technical schools is very small as compared with the total number of persons of producing age—little more than one-half of 1 per cent. The majority of these students are young men and women who are becoming more mature and fit for service. The older of the 60,000,000 men and women of producing age are growing more unfit and are passing beyond the age of service. It should also be remembered that the more mature the young men who volunteer for service in the Army the more valuable their services will be. The age of selective draft is from 21 to 30.

Therefore a right conception of patriotism should induce all students who can not render some immediate service of great value to remain in college, concentrate their energies on their college work, and thus be all the more ready and fit when their services may be needed either for war or for the important work of reconstruction and development in our own and other countries when the war shall have ended.

Fortunately it is possible for all schools to continue for the present at least in their full educational efficiency and with little or no diminution in their attendance, and at the same time contribute much to the national defense.

For the purpose of promoting the ends herein set forth the following suggestions are offered for an educational program during the war:

GENERAL.

All schools of whatever grade should remain open with their full quota of officers and teachers. The salaries of teachers should not be lowered in this time of unusual high cost of living. When possible, salaries should be increased in proportion to the services rendered. Since the people will be taxed heavily by the Federal Government for the payment of the expenses of the war, teachers should be willing to continue to do their work, and do it as well as they can, as a patriotic service even if their salaries can not now be increased. All equipment necessary for the best use of the time of teachers and students should be provided, as should all necessary increase of room, but costly building should not be undertaken now while the prices of building material are excessively high and while there are urgent and unfilled demands for labor in industries pertaining directly and immediately to the national defense. Schools should be continued in full efficiency, but in most instances costly building may well be postponed.

During school hours and out of school, on mornings, afternoons, Saturdays, and during vacation all older children and youth should be encouraged and directed to do as much useful productive work as they can without interfering with their more important school duties. This productive work should be so directed as to give it the highest possible value, both economically and educationally. For children and youth in schools of all grades there will be need of more effective moral training, and provision should be made for this. While the war for the safety of democracy is in progress and when it is over there will be greater need for effective machinery for the promotion of intelligent discussion of the principles of democracy and all that pertains to the public welfare of local communities, counties, States, and the Nation. To this end every schoolhouse should be made a community center and civic forum with frequent meetings for the discussion of matters of public interest and for social intercourse. The Bureau of Education will give advice in regard to this upon request.

I. ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

Except in case of great need, attendance laws should be enforced as usual. Parents should be encouraged to make all possible efforts to keep their children in school and should have public or private help when they can not do so without it. Many young children will lack the home care given them in times of peace, and there will be need of many more kindergartens and Montessori schools than we now have. Much might be gained by keeping the elementary schools open all the year with such changes in study and daily regimen as may be necessary to adapt the schools to the

changes of the season. A school year of four terms of 12 weeks each is suggested. Home gardening and other useful occupations should be encouraged and when possible should be directed by the school. In country and village schools boys and girls should be encouraged to join corn clubs, canning clubs, poultry clubs, and other similar clubs for the production and conservation of foods. These clubs should be directed by teachers with the help of farm-demonstration agents and other employees of agricultural colleges and departments of agriculture of States and the Federal Government. In the South boys and girls should be encouraged to grow peas, peanuts, sweet potatoes, beets, turnips, onions, and other root and bulb crops. In city schools wholesome school lunches should be provided at cost and should be given without price when necessary. Girls in the higher grades should be directed in making clothing for smaller children who will need the help. Teachers should consult local charity associations as to what assistance can be given them through the schools.

II. HIGH SCHOOLS.

The attendance in the high schools should be increased, and more boys and girls should be induced to remain until their course is completed. A school year of four terms of 12 weeks each is recommended for the high schools, as for the elementary schools. In the high schools adopting this plan arrangements should be made for half-time attendance, according to the Fitchburg, Cincinnati, and Spartanburg, S. C., plans, for as large a proportion of pupils as possible. In all high schools more attention should be given to chemistry, physics, biology, and to industrial, social, and civic subjects. Where possible, high schools should remain open this summer and give intensive work in the sciences, in manual training, domestic science and arts, and in trades and industries. Many boys might thus be fitted for engineering and agricultural courses in college a year earlier than they otherwise would be, and girls might be fitted to enter college a year earlier for courses in home economics. All laboratories and manual-training shops in high schools should be run at their full capacity. In many of the shops work should be done which will have immediate value for the national defense. The Bureau of Education, the Department of War, or the National Council of Defense can give information in regard to what can be done.

In all high schools in which domestic science (sewing, cooking, sanitation, etc.) is taught, large units of time should be given in the summer and fall to sewing for the Red Cross and for local charities. There will be much suffering next winter in all our larger cities. Charity associations and relief societies will need all the help they

can get. Hundreds of thousands of garments should be made in the public and private high schools during the summer and fall. Local chapters of the Red Cross can give information as to its needs. Classes for grown-up women should be formed in which practical instruction can be given largely by lecture and demonstration in the conservation and economic use of food. These classes should meet at such times as may be most convenient for the women, and all women who have to do with housekeeping or home making should be encouraged to attend them. In country and village high schools in which agriculture and domestic science are taught, boys and girls should be encouraged to undertake home projects under the direction of their teachers, after the Massachusetts plan, and classes meeting once a week or oftener should be formed for the women of the community for instruction in the preservation of foods, sanitation, and economic housekeeping.

III. CONTINUATION SCHOOLS AND EVENING SCHOOLS.

For all boys and girls who can not attend the day sessions of the high schools, continuation classes should be formed, to meet at such times as may be arranged during working hours or in the evening. All cities should maintain evening schools for adult men and women. In cities having considerable numbers of immigrants, evening schools should be maintained for them with classes in English, in civics, and such other subjects as will be helpful to these foreigners in understanding our industrial, social, civic, and political life. For instruction in trades and industries and for continuation schools, the funds provided by the Federal vocational educational law, the so-called Smith-Hughes Act, may be used.

IV. NORMAL SCHOOLS.

In few States is the supply of broadly educated and well-trained teachers equal to the demand. In some States the normal schools do not yet prepare half enough teachers to fill the vacancies. The need for better schools to meet the new demands for a higher level of average intelligence, scientific knowledge, and industrial skill, which will come with the reestablishment of peace, makes more urgent the need for more and better trained teachers. Every dollar expended for education and every day of every child in school must be made to produce the fullest possible returns. The normal schools should double their energies and use all their funds in the most economic way for the work of preparing teachers. Appropriations for the support of normal schools should be largely increased, as should also the attendance of men and women preparing for service as teachers. Most of these schools now have summer sessions and adapt their work to the needs and convenience of their students, and

especially of teachers already in the service who wish to use their vacations in further preparation. All normal schools that do not do this now should at once make arrangements to do it. Such normal schools as have well-equipped departments of domestic science or home economics should this summer offer special courses for teachers and other women who are willing to form classes in domestic science and arts at the rural and village schools for the women of the communities in which the schools are located.

V. COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES, AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS.

It is to be expected that many of the older and upper class men in colleges, universities, and technical schools will volunteer for some branch of the military service, but all young men below the age of liability to selective draft and those not recommended for special service should be urged to remain and take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the colleges, universities, and technical schools, to the end that they may be able to render the most effective service in the later years of the war and the times of need that will follow. Practically all women students should remain, and all boys and girls graduating from high schools should be urged to enter college, technical school, or normal school. The total number of students in these schools should be increased rather than diminished. All students should be made to understand that it is their duty to give to their country and to the world the best and fullest possible measure of service, and that both will need more than they will get of that high type of service which only men and women of the best education and training can give. Patriotism and the desire to serve humanity may require of these young men and women the exercise of that very high type of self-restraint that will keep them to their tasks of preparation until the time comes when they can render service which can not be rendered by others.

All institutions of higher learning should reduce the cost of living and all other expenses to the lowest possible figure so that the fewest possible number may be excluded because of the cost of attendance. The instructors of the institutions themselves, societies, and individuals should lend to worthy students at low rates of interest and on as long terms as may be necessary funds needed to keep them in college until graduation. To do so may prove to be a most effective means of patriotic service. Calendars of colleges, universities, and technical schools should be so modified as to enable them to use their plants most fully and to meet most effectively the needs of their students. It is probable that for many the school year of four quarters of 12 weeks each will prove most useful. For others, summer courses with special emphasis on engineering and other technical and professional courses may be best. Quite certainly, all these in-

stitutions should give every possible opportunity for intensive instruction in these subjects and in chemistry, physics, biology, and their practical, productive applications. Full use should be made of all laboratories and shops, whether for teaching and demonstration or for research. In many of them much productive work might be done for the immediate service of the country. The Departments of War and of the Navy, the American Red Cross, the National Council of Defense, and the Bureau of Education will be able to make suggestions in regard to this from time to time. In their summer quarters or summer schools all of these institutions that have departments or schools of home economics should give special, intensive courses for teachers and other women who are willing to organize, next fall and winter, classes of women who are housekeepers and home makers in country, village, and city, and instruct them in the conservation and economic use of foods and in the most practical principles and methods of home economics.

In agricultural colleges special intensive courses should be given to prepare teachers, directors, and supervisors of agriculture and practical farm superintendents. It should be remembered that the scientific knowledge and the supervising and directing skill of these men and their ability to increase the productive capacity of thousands of men of less knowledge and skill are far more valuable than the work they can do as farm hands. The total number of agricultural students in all colleges is only a fraction more than one-tenth of 1 per cent of the total number of persons engaged in agriculture, or about 13 in 10,000—not enough to affect materially the agricultural production of the country by their labor, but enough to affect it immensely by their directive power when their college courses have been finished. All State universities and colleges of agriculture and mechanic arts, and all other institutions that do extension work, should prepare themselves to render still more effective service in this direction. There will be need for it. No college, university, or technical school that can avoid it should permit its faculty or student body to be scattered or its energy to be dissipated. All should redouble their energies and concentrate them on those things that will be of most service during the progress of the war and which will prepare their students for the most effective service of the country and of the world when the war is over.

The desire to render immediate service is praiseworthy, and the spirit which prompts it should be fostered, but it is effective service that finally counts. Schools and school officers, teachers, and students should ever keep this goal of effective service in mind.

WASHINGTON : GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1917

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